

County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) CalWORKs Program Guide

Welfare-to-Work Orientation and Appraisal

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Background:

Orientation (ORE) and Appraisal (APR) are the first mandatory Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities for all CalWORKs recipients who are required to participate in WTW or are exempt and choose to participate as volunteers.

Policy:

The Employment Case Manager (ECM) must complete ORE/APR within 15 business days of the date the Human Services Specialist (HSS) refers the following participants to WTW:

- New WTW participants
- Previous WTW participants who have had a break in aid of 30 calendar days or more or after an exemption from WTW of 30 days or more
- Participants who are referred to WTW as Exempt Volunteers

WTW Orientation:

During the WTW ORE which is conducted either individually or in a group setting prior to the APR, the participants are provided with an overview of the WTW program and the various WTW activities available to reach the goal of self-sufficiency. Participants are informed of barrier removal programs and supportive services available to assist them in successfully participating in WTW activities and meeting the required number of participation hours. In addition, participants are provided with a general description of their rights, duties, and responsibilities. All participants must be provided with the CalWORKs Employment Services Handbook (27-07) prior to APR.

[Processing Guide 10-005.D.1](#)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Screenings:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Screenings are required at the time of APR for all recipients referred to WTW. The regional Alcohol and Drug (AOD)/Mental Health Services (MHS) Contractor will meet with the participant after the WTW ORE in a private setting for the recipient to be screened. See [CPG 10-011.D](#) and [CPG 10-011 E](#), for more details regarding Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

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WTW Appraisal and the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT):

The WTW APR consists of an individual interview between the participant and the ECM. The APR shall gather and provide information about the individual including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Employment history, interests, and skills;
- Educational history;
- Learning disabilities;
- Housing status and stability;
- Language barriers;
- Physical and behavioral health, including, but not limited to, mental health and substance abuse issues;
- Child health and well-being;
- Criminal background that may present a barrier to employment or housing stability;

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- Past or present domestic abuse issues;
- The need for supportive services; and
- Any other information that may affect an individual's ability to participate in work activities.

OCAT is a standardized APR tool that is used by all counties in California and was implemented in San Diego County as of 8/3/2015. Currently, there is no interface between OCAT and CalWIN. OCAT is designed for use when any of the following occurs:

- A participant attends the WTW initial ORE/APR
- Any participant has a break in aid of 30 calendar days or more or after an exemption from WTW of at least 30 calendar days or more (Must also complete ORE along with OCAT APR)
- A participant is referred to WTW as an Exempt Volunteer (Must also complete ORE along with OCAT APR)
- An Exempt volunteer whose WTW status changes to registered mandatory (Must also complete ORE along with OCAT APR)
- A WTW sanctioned participant attends ORE/APR to cure sanction
- A WTW participant sanctioned for any reason besides ORE/APR requests to cure his/her sanction and is identified with a major barrier(s) or if there is evidence that previous WTW activities completed by the participant were not beneficial in moving participant toward self-sufficiency
- An existing participant with no break in aid of 30 days or more who is identified as having a major barrier(s) or if there is evidence that previous WTW activities completed by the participant were not beneficial in moving participant toward self-sufficiency

IMPORTANT: The following are considered major barriers: being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, possessing a felony, Human Trafficking, and Learning Disabilities (LD). See [OCAT Desk Aid](#) for more details on who is required to complete OCAT.

At the beginning of an OCAT APR, the participant is to be given a copy of the OCAT Rights and Privacy Form ([WTW 47](#)). The ECM must review the form with the participant and discuss the purpose and benefits of OCAT prior to conducting the OCAT APR. The ECM is to review with the participant the subjects that will be discussed during the APR and inform the participant that everything discussed during the APR will be kept confidential, unless ECM suspects that elder and/or child abuse is occurring. In the event that a participant does not wish to sign the [WTW 47](#), ECM will note in case comments that the [WTW 47](#) was provided, and that participant declined to sign and continue with the appraisal. No further action is necessary.

If more than one adult in an assistance unit is required to participate in WTW, the ECM is required to conduct an individual and private OCAT APR for each participant as many of the topics in OCAT are inappropriate to discuss if the participant is not alone. If a participant requests to have a person present (i.e. second parent, parent, children, advocate, etc.) during the OCAT APR, the ECM will document participant's choice of having another person present, their relationship to the participant and continue with the completion of OCAT APR.

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At the beginning of an OCAT APR, the ECM is to present the participant with the [WTW 47](#) explaining what OCAT is, and the type of questions that will be asked. If a participant feels uncomfortable during the OCAT APR and requests to have a male/female ECM, then the ECM is to accommodate to the participant's request by letting their supervisor know and arranging for a male/female ECM to conduct the OCAT APR on the same day with the participant.

A participant may opt out of any portion of the OCAT APR, except the collection of demographic information, but more accurate and complete results are generated when as many sections of OCAT are completed as possible. The ECM must document the reason why participant did not want to answer certain sections of OCAT in OCAT and CalWIN case comments. If the participant does not wish to state the reason, the ECM will document participant's refusal to disclose.

If a participant completely refuses to complete OCAT in its entirety, the ECM must document the reason why participant did not want to answer the questions in OCAT. If the participant does not wish to state the reason, the ECM will document participant's refusal to disclose. ECM must present the participant with the [WTW 47](#) prior to starting the OCAT APR and explain the purpose of the OCAT APR as well as share with the participant the positive aspects of why it is being completed, and that it is confidential unless child/elder abuse is suspected. The ECM must ensure that all required APR forms including the WTW Participant Profile ([27-01](#)) are completed, and that participant is provided with resources/referrals as applicable. ECM must evaluate supportive services needs as well as ensure that participant is assigned to the next appropriate activity, and document all actions taken.

A participant cannot be sanctioned for not answering questions in OCAT, but a participant may be sanctioned for refusal to participate in the WTW APR. Many sections of OCAT address sensitive topics, which a participant may not be comfortable disclosing, and cannot be required to answer. A participant shall be considered compliant with the appraisal process even if he/she does not wish to disclose answers to specific questions in OCAT as long as he/she completes required APR forms, and provides enough information to the ECM to allow for proper assigning to the next appropriate WTW activity.

As a participant progresses through his or her WTW activities, ECMs may find it useful to update the participant's OCAT APR to reflect new skills or job experiences or identify potential new barriers and needs.

If a participant is required to complete a new APR, but OCAT has auto-filled with the answers from a prior interview, a new OCAT questionnaire may be generated with the answers from the prior appraisal. The ECM will review and update answers from the prior interview to determine if any changes need to be made to the Appraisal summary and recommendations (ASR). This review of the questionnaire and update of the ASR meets the threshold for a new APR. After 12 months, as OCAT is currently configured, this 'pre-loading' functionality is no longer available and a completely new APR questionnaire would need to be completed with the participant.

NOTE: When administering ORE/APR, any reasonable accommodations necessary for the participant to complete the ORE/APR are to be provided according to the participant's needs.

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Supportive services must be provided for all required CalWORKs activities. See [CPG 10-011.A](#), [CPG 10-011.B](#) and [CPG 10-011.C](#) in regards to Supportive Services.
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OCAT Notes:

In the upper-right hand corner of every section in OCAT there is a “Notes” button so that the ECM may add any information that is not directly addressed by a question in the tool, or add any thoughts that are pertinent to the case.

[Processing Guide 10-005.D.1](#)

OCAT Action Plan and Referral/Evaluation Status:

An action plan is a specific action that the ECM assigns to a participant in order to comply with the recommendation in OCAT. The recommendations may include evaluation for Family Stabilization (FS), Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs), WTW exemptions, Job Search (JS), and/or an assessment for education/training. These recommendations are to be used to determine the next best steps for the participant in the WTW process. In the case of possible exemptions or FS referrals, these recommendations from OCAT must be evaluated **immediately** to determine if an exemption from WTW is necessary or if FS services are needed.

The ECM will review the recommendations generated by OCAT with the participant, and allow the participant to decide if they agree or disagree with the recommendations. If the participant disagrees with any of the recommendations, the ECM is required to go back to each section that produced the recommendation which participant disagrees with, and review each question in that section with participant to ensure that participant agrees with those answers. An action plan and referral/evaluation status must be completed by ECM for **each** recommendation generated by OCAT for each participant.

If the results of an OCAT APR indicate that the individual may face barriers that impair his or her ability to participate in work activities, the ECM will consider the individual for a WTW exemption if applicable, or refer the individual for barrier evaluation and services as appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to evaluation and services for LD, MHS, SAS, and/or Family Violence services (FVS). If the individual's barriers present an immediate crisis that qualifies for FS services, the individual shall be referred to the FS coordinator for further evaluation. If the barrier is not an immediate crisis, or does not qualify for FS, the ECM shall refer the individual to an appropriate evaluation to address the barrier. This additional evaluation must be completed before or take place concurrent to any subsequent WTW activities.

While a number of possible exemptions are identified in OCAT, the tool does not currently identify all possible WTW exemptions. The recommendations from the tool only assist in identifying whether an exemption condition may exist and directs the ECM to evaluate the participant's situation to properly determine if he/she qualifies for an exemption. OCAT does not determine whether an exemption should be granted.

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ASR:

The ASR is a PDF version of the participant's demographic, household, and financial information, as well as the strengths, barriers, recommendations, and action items. Once the OCAT APR is completed, ECM will generate the ASR from OCAT and provide the participant with the option of obtaining a copy of the ASR. ECM will indicate the participant's decision in case comments. The ASR does not require a signature.

[Processing Guide 10-005.D.1](#)

Required Appraisal Forms:

ECMs are **not** to print forms from OCAT as they are not barcoded. The following forms must be completed during the APR, retained in the case file and recorded as part of the ORE/APR narrative in CalWIN:

Form Number	Form Name								
06-302	Personal Responsibility Agreement.								
27-62	Welfare-To-Work Behavioral Health Screening Tool (completed by regional AOD/MHS contractor and provided to ECM).								
27-344	Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (Refugee participants only). See CPG 10-200.A Refugee Employment Services for additional information.								
CCP7	CalWORKs Stage One Child Care Request Form and Reimbursement Rules.								
RS1	Refugee Resettlement Program Services Application and Assessment Information (Refugee participants only). See CPG 10-200.A Refugee Employment Services for additional information.								
WTW 1	WTW Plan Rights and Responsibilities.								
WTW 17	Waiver of CalWORKs Learning Disabilities (LD) Screening and/or Evaluation. If a participant chooses to be evaluated for LD, the following forms must be completed in addition to OCAT: <table><tr><th>Number</th><th>Name</th></tr><tr><td>LD</td><td>Learning Disability Evaluation</td></tr><tr><td>WTW 20</td><td>Permission to Release Learning Disabilities Information</td></tr><tr><td>26-19</td><td>Learning Disabilities Communication Form</td></tr></table>	Number	Name	LD	Learning Disability Evaluation	WTW 20	Permission to Release Learning Disabilities Information	26-19	Learning Disabilities Communication Form
Number	Name								
LD	Learning Disability Evaluation								
WTW 20	Permission to Release Learning Disabilities Information								
26-19	Learning Disabilities Communication Form								

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	<p>Note: ECMs are no longer required to use the Learning Needs Screening form (WTW 18) when completing the LD screening, and can use OCAT LD screening instead.</p> <p>Enter the Learning Disabilities Coding in CalWIN. Refer to How To #235 - Learning Disabilities Coding on the CalWIN Intranet.</p> <p>See CPG 10-006 A for additional information regarding Learning Disabilities.</p>
WTW 47	Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool Rights and Privacy.

ES staff will no longer obtain the following documents as of 07/01/2015 and will instead refer to the latest captured version in the CalWIN Electronic Records Management System (CERMS) obtained by FRC staff:

Form Number	Form Name
20-46	Language Needs Determination Form
I-94	Arrival/Departure Record

If form 20-46 indicates that the participant is Limited English Proficient (LEP), then the APR must be conducted in the participant's primary language through the use of bilingual ECMs, forms in the participant's primary language, and/or interpreter services. Use of bilingual ECMs or interpreters must be documented in CalWIN. ORE/APR case comment must include how participant's language needs are met. HHS Civil Rights - Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement (20-49) must be completed when an interpreter is used. ES staff will send an Employment Services Request (ESR) [27-357](#) to the appropriate FRC to notify them of issues with image quality or if front/back of the 20-46 or I-94 is missing in CERMS. See [CPG 10-005.J](#) Employment Services Requests and Escalation Process.

As of 8/6/2015 the [27-01](#) form will no longer be required to be completed during OCAT APR **unless** a participant refuses to complete OCAT. The [27-01](#) is not to be given to the participant for completion as it will be completed by the ECM during the interactive APR interview.

As of 9/1/2015, WTW Behavioral Health Screening Result form (27-63) will no longer be provided to ECMs by the AOD/MHS Contractor.

Telephone/Mail ORE/APR:

ECMs can complete a telephone/mail ORE/OCAT APR only with participants who are unable to come into the WTW office during normal business hours due to their work/school schedule. The ECM must be able to verify the identity of the individual being interviewed, confirm that he/she has privacy during the conversation (not in the presence of others), and confirm that he/she is the only one being interviewed and able to take appropriate precautions regarding confidentiality.

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Participants with Language Barriers:

For participants with language barriers, such as limited English proficiency, the complete OCAT APR may not be appropriate. At this time, OCAT is only available in English. Participants with limited English proficiency or requiring English as a Second Language (ESL) services should be immediately referred to evaluation for services to address those barriers. Assistance by a translator may be used to complete the demographic, job history, and education history sections of the tool. However, translation may not be appropriate for sensitive sections of OCAT, such as mental health or domestic abuse. In those instances, participants must be referred directly to the appropriate evaluations rather than using OCAT for screening if there is a reasonable belief that the evaluation is necessary.

A participant cannot be given a learning disabilities screening and/or evaluation in a language other than the participant's primary language. The WTW 18 is the only learning disabilities screening tool that can be used for CalWORKs WTW participants, and it cannot be translated or used with an interpreter, as it has only been validated for use in English. Since the OCAT learning needs screening is the same as the WTW 18, the OCAT learning needs screening shall not be used in any language other than English, as the WTW 18 is only valid for use in English.

[Processing Guide 10-005.D.1](#)

Determining Remoteness:

Recipients are excused from participating in WTW activities if participating in the activities would require travel over:

- Two hours per day round trip, excluding the time to take children to and/or from school or child care; or
- Two miles per day round trip, excluding the miles traveled to take children to and/or from school or child care when the only means of transportation is walking. See [CPG 10-020-B](#) and [CPG 10-025.B.3](#) regarding Good Cause for not participating.

Employment Services Request (ESR):

ECM will complete an ESR as deemed appropriate per [CPG 10-005.J](#). Employment Services Requests and Escalation Process when a participant reports information during APR that is different from what is in CalWIN (i.e. household composition, address changes, new employment, etc.).

OCAT Reporting:

OCAT provides real-time data that enables the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and OCAT users (depending on access level) to:

- View a glimpse of agency statistics, such as the number of appraisals
- Recognize the needs of participants by better understanding the characteristics and demographics of the participants
- Use data to improve targeted services at the case management, supervisory, and administrative levels

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OCAT Help Desk:

In order to ensure that questions are streamlined and prevent duplication of efforts, only OCAT Administrators from each WTW Contractor will have the capability of calling the OCAT help desk directly.

Resources:

All resources provided in OCAT are not local resources. ECMs are to ensure that resources provided to participants are local resources outside of OCAT to ensure better outcomes for participants.

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Procedure:

[Processing Guide 10-005.D.1](#)

Other Program Impacts:

N/A

References:

[ACL 15-43](#)

[ACL 15-69](#)

[MPP 42-711.52](#)

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12/31/2018.

Release Date:

12/14/2015